

THE CHRONICLE AND DIRECTORY

For 1884.
With which is incorporated
THE CHINA DIRECTORY.

(TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL ISSUE)
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THE CHRONICLE AND DIRECTORY

has been thoroughly revised and brought up to date, and it again much increased in size. It contains DESPATCHES and STATISTICAL ACCOUNTS of and DIRECTORIES for

HONGKONG.

Do. London Directors. Nipponiki.

Do. Military Forces. Kobe (Hiro).

Do. Chinese Hongkong. Osaka.

Do. Yokohama. Naha.

Do. Manila. Naha.

Do. Batavia. Naha.

Do. Hongkong. Naha.

Do. Amoy. Naha.

Do. Swatow. Naha.

Do. Canton. Naha.

Do. Shanghai. Naha.

Do. Peking. Naha.

Do. Newchwang. Naha.

Do. Korea. Naha.

Do. Japan. Naha.

Do. Formosa. Naha.

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HONGKONG DISPENSARY, 23

THE DAILY PRESS.

HONGKONG, FEBRUARY 1ST, 1884.

On our fourth page yesterday we reprinted an article from the *St. James's Gazette* dealing with a quaint old book entitled "A discourse on the National Excellence of England," written by one ROBERT HAWKINS during the protectorate of OLIVER CROMWELL. The worst fault HAWKINS can see in his compatriots is their excessive generosity towards conquered enemies. "I could wish they were not too open-hearted in their treatment; for (if I do not mistake) they have thereby lost not a few advantages." Had HAWKINS been writing in the present day he would no doubt have considered the surrender of China a case in point. He would have seen also that it was not only to conquered enemies that England was open-hearted, but that a large portion of her people had been seized upon by a feeling of intense self-abasement, that instead of contemplating with pride the national excellencies of their country they are for ever dwelling on her sins and shortcomings, real or imaginary, chiefly the latter, and urging her statesmen to prostrate themselves in the dust. Whenever England has a difference with another nation England must necessarily, according to their view, be in the wrong. Humanitarianism has thus become the extreme in their minds as charity did in that of Don Quixote, and the effects of their conduct unfortunately make themselves felt in the direction of the national policy which tends towards self-effacement. This self-effacement may be the result of positive action or may arise from the lack of self-assertion. An instance of the latter may be found in the position of the British Consul at Shanghai. England waged alone the first war with China, it was she who secured the formal opening to foreign trade of Shanghai and the other ports mentioned in the Nanjing Treaty. British trade with China amounts to 80 per cent. of the whole foreign trade of the latter country, and yet in Shanghai, where British interests are immensely preponderant, the representative of Great Britain is, to use a familiar expression, a comparative nobody. Countries like Belgium, Sweden and Norway, Italy, and Portugal, whose interests are trifling, not to mention Germany, the United States, and Japan, maintain a representative with the rank of Consul-General, while the British representative is a simple Consul, and has consequently to give precedence to his colleagues with the higher title. In a European city the question of title and precedence might be regarded as a matter of small consideration, but under the co-operative system adopted in the government of Shanghai it becomes important. The *N. Y. Daily News* had an article upon this subject a few days ago. The position of Consul-General, our contemporary says, is an important and honourable one, and is always offered to the Consul who holds seniority in rank and time of service. "A Consul-General thus takes precedence of a Consul pure and simple, and the representative of one of the smaller European Powers, such as Holland or Belgium, who may have been here, say, three years has priority over a representative of Great Britain, Germany, or the United States who may have arrived more recently. Of course this is the only rule possible in view of the fact that by diplomatic courtesy all nations are of equal rank, but like many other institutions unimpeachable in theory it is not without its disadvantages in practice. There would be a decided anomaly in a Consul-General, including the representatives of a nation whose annual trade with China amounts to over 80 per cent. of the entire foreign commerce of the country, being headed by the agent of a Power which has no trade with China whatever, and whose flags are never seen in Chinese waters. Yet by virtue of his seniority either in rank or time of service such a man would be fully entitled to the post of Doyen, and as a matter of fact has before now accepted the honour and discharged the functions appertaining to it, although, in the case we are thinking of, his knowledge of English was of the most imperfect and rudimentary description. Recently, however, two Consul-Generals, feeling themselves personally unfitted for a post which involves public chairmanship and various other duties to which they were unaccustomed, declined the honour, which was thereupon offered to the Consul-General for Germany, who accepted it. It is a number of years now since the Italian Consul-General was dethroned of the body, and it may be generally affirmed that the post is held by the representative of either Germany or the United States." The British representative is ineligible for the post by reason of his being a simple Consul and not a Consul-General, and, as the *N. Y. Daily News* says—"It cannot but be justly galling to Englishmen that, in our corporate character as members of a cosmopolitan community, we should always have to look to the Consul of another Power when measures of a public character are on the tapis. Nor, to regard the matter from another standpoint, is it fair that the burden of dealing with questions which possibly affect Englishmen more than other people, upon at least a numerical basis, should always devolve upon a German or an American." Hence our contemporary advocates the

erection of the British Consulate at Shanghai into a Consulate-General; not so much from what may be called service considerations, of which outsiders are supposed to know nothing, as on political and public grounds. A strong case is made out for the change, which we should be glad to see speedily effected. In a country like China the question of prestige is one of considerable importance, and the prestige of England certainly cannot be improved in Chinese eyes by her representatives giving place to those of nations whose interests are much smaller than her own. After British relations with China had been placed on a somewhat settled basis, and the principle of exterritoriality had been formally recognized, a difficulty naturally arose from the presence at the treaty ports of the subjects of non-treaty powers. If these were involved in any disturbance there was no authority either to protect or punish them. Such a state of things was necessarily prejudicial to the maintenance of good order, and, seeing that in those days the Chinese did not very readily discriminate between Europeans of one nationality and another, it was fraught with considerable danger to the British residents. Hence the British Government recognised the desirability of all the Powers entering into treaties with China, and used its influence to bring about. It was in pursuance of the same policy, we presume, that the English and American settlements at Shanghai were placed under the present cosmopolitan system. This system has doubtless much to recommend it, but it could hardly have been contemplated, when it was entered upon, that England should take an inferior place to other nations in the government of the settlement. It would have been much better if England had retained Chusan, and made it the principal emporium of trade in the north or south, responding to Hongkong in the south. The place would then have been entirely under her own Government, and the difficulties attending the co-operative or cosmopolitan system in force at Shanghai would not have arisen. At present, however, what has to be done is to make the best of that system; and it should certainly not be allowed to operate as a place for the representative of Great Britain on a footing inferior to that of the representatives of other nations.

THE CHINESE CONSULS AT SHANGHAI.

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